



MISSION

To strengthen the well-being of all of those who share the unique experience of military life.

VISION

Strong, connected, resilient military families.

MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

This April we celebrated the month of the military child! A Pool and Dance party was held at the Shearwater Fitness & Sports Centre and throughout the month, our team, along with other MFRCs across the country wore Teal to show our support for children from military families.

CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

This April, an online workshop was facilitated by the Veteran Farm Project Society with **30** in attendance. Participants learned how to grow their own vegetables, starting with seed, and even received a starter kit!



Photo Credit: ©2023 DND-MDN, Canada

BLUENOSE BIENVENUE

Over **400** family members enjoyed a BBQ, trackless train, face painting and had a chance to meet with **40** community vendors and groups. PSP partnered with us to offer a free swim and yoga session as well!



Photo Credit: ©2023 DND-MDN, Canada

School Outreach

Our School Outreach Team has been active in schools throughout HRM with a focus on the densely military-populated areas of Eastern Passage and Cole Harbour along with the Francophone schools, Carrefour and Bois -Joli.

Our group sessions with children focus on normalizing military lifestyle challenges along with providing networks of support and a space where there is a sense of belonging.

We have also had opportunities to work with educators and support staff in schools to bring awareness to work-related absences, relocations, transitions and their impacts on families and children. With more than **5,500** military-connected children just in HRM, our goal for 2023/24 is to expand into new areas and schools.



OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Our team continues to foster relationships with the community by participating in local events and activities, such as the Navy Bike ride, DND Family Days, CANFLANT – NAIG (North American Indigenous Games) Open House, Shearwater Community Council Spring Clean Up & BBQ, South Eastern Community Health & Wholeness Fair and the Health Promotions: Healthy Harvest Fair.



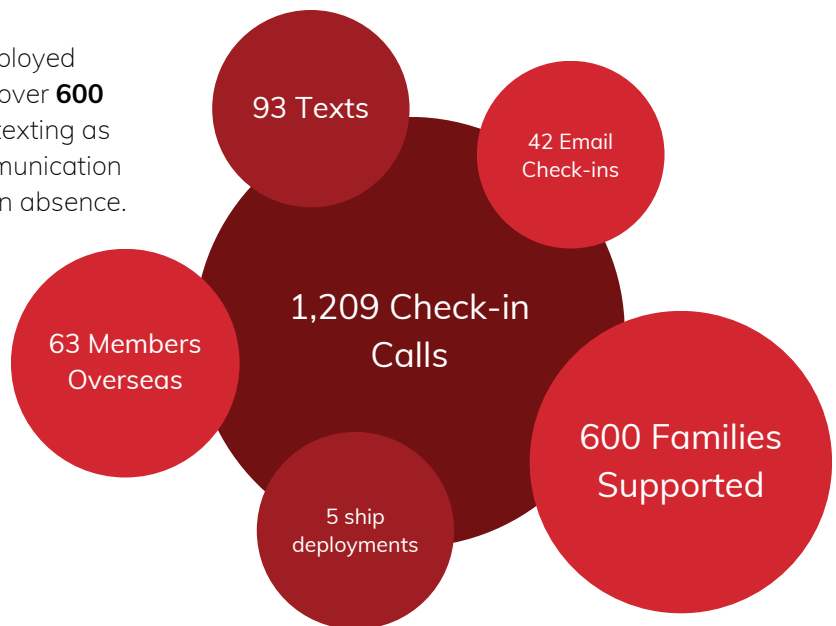
Unit Pop-Ups

Over the summer, our Military Family Navigators started outreach initiatives to various units at 12 Wing and Stadacona. This gave us an opportunity to visit the members in their workplace during their workday to provide information about the MFRC, meet newly posted members, find out who's going to deploy and answer questions. Currently, we visit 423 SQN, 12 AMS, 406 SQN, S90, and Tribute Tower for a combined total of **34 visits**. We have spoken to **over 450** very welcoming members, often saying things like "I didn't have a question last time you were here, but now I do".

We will continue to expand this outreach and add more Units to our connections.

HIGH OPERATIONAL TEMPO

The operational tempo was very high, with over **five** ships deployed plus **63** members on overseas missions. Our team supported over **600** families through these long absences. We expanded to offer texting as an option to those who prefer more informal methods of communication for check-ins with individuals supporting a loved one during an absence.



Families also enjoyed both our in-person and virtual programming, as well as our special events, such as our Easter Party (**60** people), Apple Picking at Noggins Farm (**120** people) and our outing at Shubenacadie Wildlife Park (**30** people).

SPECIALIZED CHILD CARE RECEIVES RBC FUNDING

We are thrilled to have just received funding through the RBC Foundation to assist with improvements to Specialized Child Care Support. Funding will strengthen the existing Occasional Care program while infusing it with additional staffing and sessions, creating a more sustainable and helpful service for military families. The program is not funded nationally, and program fees offset some of the costs to operate it. RBC Foundation funding will cover a large portion of the costs associated with implementing and re-vamping this high-quality, preventative, and valuable program.



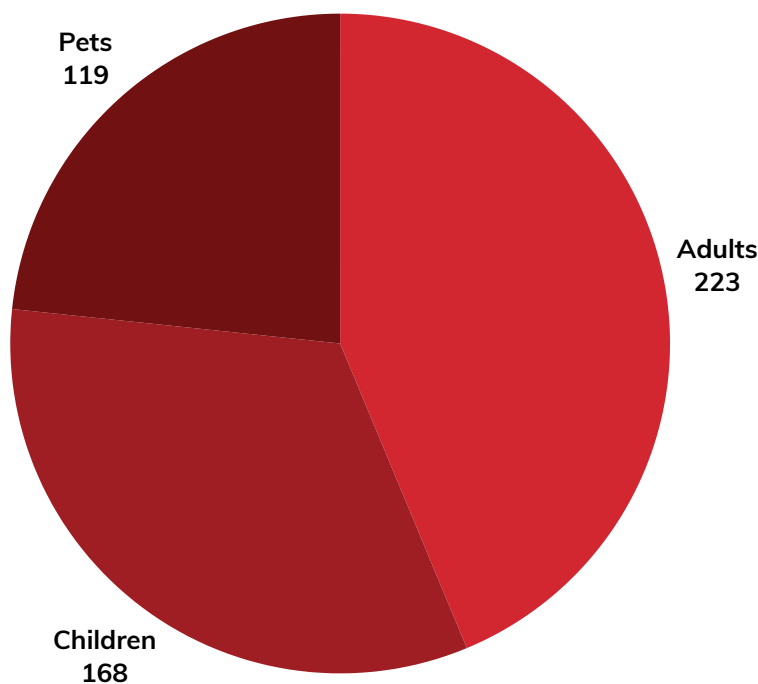
NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE

This spring severe weather events greatly impacted our community and several of our CAF families experienced the evacuation from or devastating loss of their home. Our team quickly responded to the immediate need for accommodations, and hosted a gathering event for those impacted. We also provided custom care packages with comfort items and gift cards, as families were evacuated longer than expected.

"I can't thank you all enough for everything that you have done for us and how accommodating and considerate the staff has been through this time. I will forever be grateful for the support and compassion through such a difficult time."

- CAF family, wildfire evacuee

Accommodations during Fires & Floods



In the first half of this year, we have received **2,422** requests for Information & Referral support.



ATLANTIC MFRC BOARD CONFERENCE

We had **33** Board of Directors members and Executive Directors join us from Goose Bay, Gander, St. John's, New Brunswick, PEI, Greenwood, and Halifax & Region in early November. We enjoyed a tour of HMCS Ville de Québec, shared ideas, heard from a leadership expert, and learned from industry experts on the topics of finance and governance.

Top presenting issues:

1. Accommodations
2. Child Care
3. Mental Health
 - a. Self
 - b. Child/Youth
 - c. Loved one
4. Couple Relationships
5. Special Needs Funding + Navigation

We have hosted military and Veteran families for **438 nights of stay** in our six short-term accommodation apartments

"The apartment is fantastic!! Very well appointed! I'm extremely fortunate to have been sent your way... I can't thank you all enough for helping me and my family. There are so many people in the world suffering, and I sometimes forget that my situation, although unfortunate, is insignificant in comparison. So when I encounter this enormous level of support and kindness, my heart swells. It reminds me that I can be a better person. I'm humbled, to say the least."
– Short-term accommodation guest

According to new numbers from Statistics Canada, 22% of Nova Scotians were living with food insecurity in 2022. This is up from 17.7% in the previous year.

FOOD INSECURITY

Thanks to donations of fresh and non-perishable food items from the Veteran Farm Project, **15 families** received monthly boxes to assist with food insecurity.

Due to rising needs, in December we launched a Community Pantry initiative. Through a combination of donated and purchased items, the Community Pantry will offer pantry staples, personal items, and nutritious food items to be available for our military family community members who are facing financial challenges from the added strain of inflation.

COMMUNITY PANTRY GARDE-MANGER COMMUNAUTAIRE



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As a governance board of the H&R MFRC, they have fiduciary and financial oversight, as well as set and monitor the tri-annual strategic goals.

The Board year began in September 2023 and to date has focused their work on:

- After collaboration with the MFRC team, the board approved the revised organizational values statements.
- One member of the board was co-opted to meet an MFS MOU requirement. The member was selected from the recruitment candidates and also holds a seat on the Shearwater Children's Centre, Family Advisory Committee.
- A Bylaw review process is underway with professional consultation in response to community feedback.
- Oversight of the financial position of the organization up to the mid-point of the fiscal year.